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A SOCIAL SCIENTIST LOOKS AT THE CURRENT VALUES AND CHANGING NEEDS OF YOUTH. FINAL DRAFT.

BY- HAVIGHURST, ROBERT J.

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ADOLESCENCE IS CHARACTERIZED AS A PERIOD OF BIOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS THE SAME FOR ALL RACES, A MORATORIUM PERIOD BETWEEN CHILDHOOD AND ADULT ROLES, AND A PERIOD DURING WHICH A YOUTH ACQUIRES AN IDENTITY. ADOLESCENTS CAN BE CLASSIFIED INTO THREE SUBGROUPS. FIRST ARE THE MAINTAINERS OF SOCIETY GROUP WHO ARE CHARACTERIZED BY RESPONSIBILITY, AUTONOMY, AND INDIVIDUALISM WHICH IS DEMONSTRATED THROUGH WORK. SECONDLY, THE MARGINAL GROUP IS CHARACTERIZED BY THOSE WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL. FINALLY, THE UNCOMMITTED GROUP CONSISTS OF YOUTH WITH AVERAGE OR SUPERIOR ABILITY WHO DO NOT ACHIEVE BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE TASKS OF GROWING UP. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE MARGINAL GROUP CALLS FOR REMEDIAL WORK AND UTILIZATION OF WORK EXPERIENCES. PROGRAMS FOR THE UNCOMMITTED YOUTH FOCUS ON BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL FIDELITY THROUGH ACTIVITIES WHICH PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE TO SOCIETY. FOR THE MAINTAINERS, A HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM IS DESIRABLE WHICH HELPS YOUTH MAKE A RATIONAL, OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF MODERN SOCIETY AND BUILDS FAITH IN THE PERFECTIBILITY OF HUMAN SOCIETY. SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR OR AGAINST EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED AND EDUCATIONALLY MALADJUSTED ADOLESCENTS NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED THROUGH SYSTEMATIC EXPERIMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A VARIETY OF PROCEDURES. REACTIONS TO THE PRESENTATION ARE GIVEN. THIS SPEECH WAS PRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE ON YOUTH (MERIDEN, CONN., APRIL 26-27, 1966). (JH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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(Final Draft)

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The Current Values and Changing Needs of Youth

.. REPORT

OF THE

CONFERENCE ON YOUTH

Conducted by the

CONNECTICUT SECONDARY SCHOOL YOUTH PROJECT

at Meriden, Connecticut

April 26 and 27, 1966

Sponsors of the Project

The Connecticut Association of Secondary Schools

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The Connecticut State Department of Education

The State Commission on Youth Services

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FINAL DRAFT

Introduction of Dr. Havighurst

A. Raymond Rogers, Jr. Chairman of the Project Committee

We're very happy to have Professor Havighurst with us today to start this conference. Professor Havighurst was reared in Illinois and attended colleges in Ohio, where he took his A.B. degree at Ohio Wesleyan University and his Ph. D. in Chemistry at Ohio State University. He did research work in chemistry and physics for several years and taught these subjects at Miami University in Ohio and at the University of Wisconsin. Becoming interested in the problems of education, he changed his field to education and taught at Ohio State University and the University of Chicago, where he has been Professor of Education since 1941.

Professor Havighurst has conducted research in the field of human development at all age levels and is the author or co-author of the following books: "Human Development in Education," "Educating the Gifted," "Older People," "Society in Education," "The Psychology of Moral Character," Growing Up in River City," "Society and Education in Brazil," "The Public Schools of Chicago - A Survey Report," "The Educational Mission of the Church."

Since January, 1965, Dr. Havighurst has divided his time between the University of Chicago and the University of Missouri at Kansas City. At Kansas City he was Professor of Education and Director of the Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems in Education. At Chicago, he continues on a half time basis as Professor of Education in Human Development and presently he is on the National Commission of Secondary Education of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This is a blue ribbon committee that includes both lay people and educators studying the problems of secondary education.

I am very pleased to present Robert J. Havighurst.

(Final Draft)

Robert J. Havighurst

A Social Scientist Looks at

The Current Values and Changing Needs of Youth

In a changing society the behavior and the values of young people are always looked upon by the older generation with hope mingled with disgust. In youth lies the hope of the future. We know this, as we know that society is changing and each new generation must find new ways. But young people tend to do things that are immoral, or foolish, or both. We know this, and we try to help them avoid mistakes. Youth are at the same time socially irresponsible and socially idealistic.

Constancy and Change

There are some constancies that make adolescence the same at all times and places and for all youth. At the same time there are differences between adolescence in various societies and between adolescence in two consecutive generations within a given society.

First, let us look at the constancies. Biologically, adolescence is the same in all races and in all the centuries where we have any knowledge of human development. Nature's built-in time clock controls the changes of puberty, their order and their timing. There is some evidence that sexual maturity comes now perhaps a year earlier than it did a hundred years ago in Western Europe, but this change came slowly and is hardly perceptible between parents and their children.

Socially, adolescence is a moratorium between childhood and adult roles, during which time a youth slowly acquires adult roles by a process of trial and error, with the help of educational institutions and of his own peers. Each generation must find a way of life that grows out of its own childhood and fits into what it perceives to be the historical process leading to the future.

Psychologically, adolescence is a period of time during which a youth acquires an identity. He narrows and focuses his personal, occupational, sexual, and ideological commitments to the point where he is perceived by others to be an autonomous adult.

Difference Between Generations

When we leave the broad view of adolescence and look at it more closely we find a great deal of variation even between two successive generations. There are differences in the behavior of adolescents. Let us look at these differences by comparing the adolescents of about 1930 with those of about 1966 in the United States.

The industrialization and technification of society has taken young men out of the labor force and kept them longer in school. Thus the number of college students increased between 1915 and 1966 from ½ million to 4.5 million, while the number of horses decreased from 26 million to 4 million. The change is from horsepower to brain-power.

The growth of big cities has taken youth off the farms and out of the small towns and brought them to the metropolitan areas of the country. Thus, many more of our youth now grow up in urban surroundings.

Within the metropolitan areas the most rapid growth of population since 1930 has been in the suburbs. Between 1950 and 1960 the central cities in our two hundred odd metropolitan areas grew little or not at all. In fact, the majority of fifteen largest cities lost population. At the same time the suburbs gained about fifty percent in population. At present about thirty percent of our youth live in suburbs.

In effect there has been a lengthening of adolescence through postponing the age of going to work. But this has been combined with an earlier age of marriage. The median age of marriage in the United States is between nineteen and twenty for females and between twenty-two and twenty-three for males, over a year younger than it was in 1930. This is to some extent a middle-class as well as a working-class phenomenon. It is not uncommon for middle-class boys and girls to marry at eighteen or twenty and to continue their studies in the university. Thus marriage is becoming a part of the experience of adolescence rather than a mark of its termination.

Another aspect of changed behavior of adolescents is the major increase of juvenile delinquency which has taken place, mainly since the close of World War II. This is statistically most frequent in the slums of the big cities, and is associated with increased rates of venereal disease.

With these differences over successive generations there may have come a difference in what is generally called the adolescent sub-culture or the adolescent peer culture. An adolescent age-group with its own culture makes its appearance in all societies where participation in the family is insufficient to develop full social maturity. The adolescent seeks out a group of his peers to aid him in becoming an autonomous person and a socially effective adult.

Disagreement on Changes

There is some question whether the American adolescent culture has changed much in the present century. Observers are not agreed as to what major changes have taken place in it. One group sees an increasing gulf between the adult and the adolescent society, while another sees a narrowing gap. The first group sees greater tension and conflict between parents and their adolescent children and between teachers and their adolescent pupils. The other group sees a relaxation of tension between the generations in the family and the school. This latter group believes that parents, especially middle-class parents, understand their adolescent children and are more permissive toward them than was the case a generation ago. Parents now tolerate more freedom and expect more responsibility in their children. The "flaming youth" of the 1920's have been replaced by a generation of adolescents who are actually more free and less rebellious than their predecessors. In other words, adolescents are better integrated into the general culture in 1966 than they were in 1930. But this statement must be made with the explicit reservation that there is a larger minority of alienated youth in 1966, which provides the increase in delinquency. The development of serious cultural interests in music, art and literature, and the development of serious political interests in the elite colleges and high schools is further evidence for the proposition that the adolescent culture is closer to the adult culture that it was a generation ago.

In general, the writer inclines to agree with the latter group, and to conclude that, with the exception of the alienated minority, there is a greater eagerness on the part of adolescents today than yesterday to become responsible members of adult society, and to work actively within the system.

The willingness of adolescents to break from the past is an important and valuable element in the adolescent culture, and it may be very much needed, because modern society needs a new and more nearly universal system of ethics than the national systems of the past century. We are moving into a world-wide technological civilization and we need a world-wide system of ethics. For this we may need the strength and readiness to break with the past that characterizes a generation of well-educated adolescents who have been prepared psychologically for rational social change.

The Major Sub-groups of Youth

Educators know that there is very little practical value in speaking of "youth" or of"adolescents" as though there was a single group of young people who are all alike. Everyone is different and unique. However, if we are interested in educational policy and program, we must deal with youth in groups, and therefore some kind of classification is likely to be useful.

A useful classification is the following, based on the attitudes of young people toward society and toward their roles as citizens and workers.

A. The Maintainers of Society

The maintainers of society is a large group, perhaps 70 percent of our youth. They will be highly productive workers, and they will support the development of society. Some will be more active and more inclined toward leadership than others. Most of the country's future professional men, teachers, business owners and managers and farm owners are in this group, together with a substantial majority of clerical workers and skilled workers.

This group is characterized by the dominant American value pattern of instrumental activism, in which responsibility, autonomy, and individualism are motives, and achievement is best demonstrated through work. The American youth is oriented toward control or mastery of the human condition by working at the task. But as work opportunities for youth have decreased, the demands on youth have become more complex. A young person must learn more than ever before in order to become an effective citizen, worker, and husband or wife in a sccicty where many marriages break up. There is a rising general level of expectation of performance by youth in comparison to previous decades or generations. Also, youth have the opportunity and the responsibility of making more choices--such as the increasing range of vocational choices for boys and especially for girls.

B. The Marginal Group

The marginal group, approximately one-third of adolescent youth, drop out of school without completing high school. About sixty percent are boys and forty percent are girls. They are not a homogeneous group. Some never complete the eighth grade, while others almost finish high school. Some are from middle class families, but the great majority are from low-income working-class families. Some are rural; most are urban.

A considerable segment of dropouts adapt to the adult society fairly well. They get work and hold steady jobs. A number of the girls get married at ages as early as fifteen and make what is regarded by society as a legitimate but early start on the career of wife and mother.

However, about half of dropouts do not get steady work or do not contract a steady marriage. These are marginal to the school, marginal to the labor force, and marginal to the adult role. In 1960, in the age group sixteen through twenty, eleven percent of boys and eighteen percent of girls were in this category. The proportions of sixteen and seventeen-year-olds are somewhat greater, since they have less likelihood of getting jobs or of being married.

Young people, age sixteen to twenty, who are both marginal to the school and marginal to the labor force, have become objects of increasing concern to society because they comprise a larger group than in previous decades and because they are more visible. In an earlier time, out-of-school youth could often find work on farms, and indeed a greater number of them lived in rural or semi-rural areas than is the case today. Marginal youth today live mostly in cities and when they are idle or perhaps involved in delinquent acts, the effects of their behavior are more widely advertised.

Numbers Increase Problems

By the mid 1950's, two forces of phenomena were becoming visible which were to have drastic effects upon the position and numbers of marginal youth: first, the large population increase of children and young people due to the "baby boom" of immediate post-war years; second, the revolution in manufacturing technology caused by automation and computers. Children born in the post-war period are now in the sixteen through twenty age group. In 1960 there were 12.6 million (born 1940-44); in 1965 there were 16.1 million (born 1945-49); and in 1970 there will be 18.1 million (born 1950-54). Or putting the problem another way, 26 million young people under the age of 25 will enter the labor force during the decade of the 1960's. Of these it is estimated that six million or twenty-three percent will have some college, and another twelve million or forty-six percent will complete high school. Eight million or thirty-one percent will not complete high school. This is a larger number of dropouts than was produced during the 1950's. There is every reason to believe that the social problem of marginal youth will be greater during the 1965-1975 decade even than it has been in the last decade.

Characteristics of Boys in This Group

The boys in this group, when they drop out of school, enter a period of aimless loafing and drifting. Their lack of purpose permits them to be open to chance stimulations which further alienate them from the society around them. For instance, a group of six boys, fifteen to seventeen years old, was standing outside a settlement house one evening. One of the boys happened to sit down on the bumper of a small foreign type car parked at the curb. It rocked slightly. Soon he was rocking it harder. Immediately the other boys became involved and they soon had the car tipped up on its side. Suddenly, although they tried to prevent it, the car went completely over on its top. The boys quickly scattered but one of them had been recognized by a neighbor and soon all were down at the police station, where they were given a severe lecture and a strong warning and then released to their parents after paying for a broken aerial.

Often such youth react impulsively to apparently minor incidents which begin a series of events having serious consequences. For example, Mark and Donald, both fifteen years old and considered school misfits, were suspended from school one Wednesday noon for running and yelling in the halls. They were to return with their parents on the following Friday to be reinstated. Both boys had been suspended before and, as they walked slowly from the school, they talked about the beatings they would probably get when they got home. To kill time they went down into the railroad yard and, after a while, caught a slow freight which they believed would take them close to their homes. The freight picked up speed and they were afraid to jump. By Saturday morning the two boys were two hundred miles from home, had stolen three cars trying to get home, had burglarized two stores for food and money and had spent one night in a city jail.

Another element in this impulsiveness is an indiscriminate seeking for excitement and pleasure. Stealing cars is a favorite form of this activity. The status some youth associate with possessing and driving a car seems to outweigh caution or consideration of consequences. One sixteen-year-old boy from a large and very poor family stole a late model Lincoln and then, tooting the horn, drove it up and down the block on which he lived. Quickly arrested, he explained that he had driven the car in his neighborhood so that a certain girl in the block would see him and maybe agree to a date.

For some boys the excitement of sitting behind the wheel of a late model expensive car and driving fast appears the prime motive for stealing it. Tom, another sixteen-year-old out of school and unemployed, went on a car stealing binge. Following his arrest he explained that he hadn't been able to find work and buy a car so had decided to steal one and "joy ride" just to see how it would be. The first was so easy to take and so much fun he just continued to steal them and within a week had stolen nine cars. He took each one into the country and drove it as fast as he could on country roads. During this week he let several friends in on his activities. When he finished with a car, he parked it in a neighborhood adjacent to his own, where his friends would then pick it up. His adventure came to an end a week after it started when he piled one of the cars up on a utility pole.

Sexual experience is another major source of excitement and pleasure for youth seeking significant experience. In one group of two hundred marginal youth enrolled in a special work-study program, their ninth grade teachers and work supervisors report that most of them talk openly and with considerable sophistication about their sex life and the sex act itself, although some are quite misinformed about conception and changes in their own bodies. One sixteen-year-old asked his teacher if it wasn't true that a boy had to be eighteen before he could give a girl a baby. The teacher's reply visibly worried him. Shaking his head he muttered, "Oh, Oh, maybe she's right." then explained that a girl claimed he gave her a baby and, up till now, he didn't think it could have been his.

In a series of interviews with a hundred of these youth when they were sixteen years old, about half were noncommittal to the school interviewer concerning sexual experience. Fifteen percent acknowledged such experience but did not amplify, while the remaining thirty-five percent talked openly and with considerable candor about their sexual life.

Fighting and drinking are commonly observed among alienated youth. Fighting is a way of gaining status and power among peers. Drinking usually begins in the early teens for youth living in communities where alcohol in many forms is easily accessible and where habitual drinking is characteristic of many adults. Often drinking seems to provide the courage to carry out dangerous but exciting activities. Among older youth out of school and without jobs, drinking may become a passive kind of substitute for success and may well lead into chronic alcoholism. Often this leads to petty crime engaged in for the purpose of buying alcohol or to a very deprived existence in which meager earnings are used to buy cheap wine or any other kind of alcoholic substance available.

The Girls in This Group

The socially disadvantaged and educationally maladjusted girl is less actively anti-social than her sociological brother, but is also an alienated person. Generally she is apathetic, uninterested if not hostile to school, and almost invisible to her peers in school. One such girl responded as follows to an interview after she had quit school:

"Were you interested in the Girls' Athletic Association or the Y Teen group?"

"No, I wasn't."

"What did you think of the social life at junior high school; did you care at all for the dances?"

"I didn't know that they had them."

"Did you go to any of the games?"

"No."

"Do you feel that you were generally a part of the junior high school as far as the activities were concerned?"

"No, I don't. I went to one dance and stayed for ten minutes. I never went to another one."

"Do you feel that you were happy in junior high school?"

She laughed. "Just before school started and after school was out."

A small number of these girls are more anti-social and are sent eventually to a reformatory. These girls generally have family situations rife with illegitimacy, multiple marriages and unstable liaisons. They are susceptible to seduction through promises of affection or excitement. They are accustomed to relying on their wits to achieve pleasure. They are hostile toward people in authority. Like the boys of this group, they are impulsive and unrealistic in meeting the demands of everyday existence.

C. The Uncommitted

A third group of youth consists of boys and girls with average or superior ability who do not achieve up to their measured ability level because they are unwilling or unable to commit themselves to achieving the tasks of growing up.

The normal child grows up to early adolescence believing in himself and in his society because his family and immediate friends believe in him and in their society. The two characteristics of self-esteem and social fidelity are bestowed upon the child by his family and friends. Because they think well of him, he thinks well of himself. Because they believe they live in a good society, he believes it. Thus the average youth comes to the age of twelve or so with a reasonable amount of self-esteem and social fidelity. He has not achieved these qualities. He has inherited them without thinking about them.

At the coming of adolescence a person must commence to achieve his own self-esteem and his social fidelity. This is a part of his achievement of his identity as a person in his own right. It comes about normally as a part of his adolescent experience in school, work, play with his age-mates, and association with adult citizens and workers. The youth as he achieves identity narrows and focuses his personal, occupational, sexual and ideological commitments by getting started in one occupation, getting married and starting a family, and beginning to take part in community civic life.

Apparently this process of growth toward identity is more difficult today than it was a generation or more ago. The evidence for this statement comes from the testimony of high school counselors and teachers, from parents of intelligent and sensitive children, and from psychologists and sociologists who have studied youth culture.

Sophistication Without Maturing

Some boys and girls seem to become paralyzed in their efforts to grow up. They suffer from a diffusion of identity which makes it difficult or impossible for them to marshall their energies. They are quite sophisticated in their knowledge of the world and its complexities, as well as in their acquaintance with the seamy side of human nature. They acquire this sophistication from their schooling and from the experience of the mood of modern urban society. The mood of our society includes frankness in formerly taboo areas, self-criticism, and skepticism. Youth are exposed to this mood very directly through the mass media (television, cinema, paper-back literature, etc.). They read such books as Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye" and Golding's "Lord of the Flies", and they are encouraged to read such literature by high school teachers of literature who represent the mood of society. These books are true portrayals of a part of human nature—an unpleasant part, and not the whole truth, by any means. Perhaps these are more accurate than the literature adolescents read a generation or more ago—"Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" or "Strive and Succeed" by Horatio Alger. Furthermore, the sober and realistic writing about the dangers of nuclear war and the difficulties of international control of armaments give young people an ample picture of the immorality of national policies.

Boys and girls are shown the seamy side of personal and political life and then asked to commit themselves to social loyalty.

At the same time boys and girls are confronted with the tasks of making good in school, of choosing an occupation, of establishing themselves with the opposite sex, and these tasks are set for them a year or two earlier than they were a generation or two ago, due to the social forces making for social precocity in the middle-class part of society.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that contemporary middle-class youth show a considerable degree of self-doubt and lack of confidence in the political and economic structure of modern society. It is not surprising that a privatistic life is preferred to one of greater social commitment. Boys find it difficult to make up their minds what occupation they will prepare for. Some of them engage in a kind of sit-down strike against the academic demands made on them by school or college. Their fathers wonder why sons are so in-grown and uncertain, as compared with the greater assurance and task-orientation they remember as normal for their generation. There is not much concern about girls, since they are not expected to show the degree of instrumental activism expected of boys. With them there is more concern about their sex-role, and about the place of sexual activity in the life of a teen-age girl.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of boys and girls in this category because there is no sharp division between those who are committed and those who are not. It is a matter od degree. Perhaps we might estimate that fifteen percent of the new generation fall far enough short of realizing their visible potential to create a definite disadvantage for themselves and for the society that needs their best efforts.

Educational Programs for These Sub-Groups

For young people who have reached high school age and are not doing well in school, it is fairly obvious that "more of the same" is not likely to be successful. Either the school program should be changed, or the young person should change, or both.

Programs for the Marginal Group

There is some question whether the members of the marginal group can do much better with an academic program than they have in the past. This does not mean that they are innately slow, but that their mental skills, mental habits, and educational achievement are so severely retarded that they can hardly be expected to catch up.

Taking the most optimistic view of the possibilities of improvement in this group after age twelve, it would seem that a successful program should have one or more of the following characteristics:

1. It should be substantially different from the program they have had in the past, in which they have failed.

2. It should contain a systematic remedial program for building mental skills, based on the best research data.

3. It should satisfy some major needs of adolescents of the social type—such as excitement, challenge, money, young adult models for identification.

4. It should grow out of cooperation between the school system, the social agencies that deal with adolescents, and employers who are able to supply jobs for young people. That is, it should represent a serious and sober societal commitment to throw everything useful into the attempt to make such a program succeed. Among other things, it appears that raising the legal age for leaving school to seventeen or eighteen may be desirable. Doing this would require society to take formal responsibility for educative treatment of this sub-group--a responsibility not now recognized.

The most obvious type of program is a remedial one, which concentrates on reading and arithmetic skills. Students may be placed in smaller classes; remedial teachers may be used; programmed texts and workbooks may be introduced; parents may be recruited in a campaign to make home conditions more conducive to school success. These things have been tried with varying reports of success and failure. For instance, Dr. Samuel Shepard of St. Louis reported that by working with seventh and eighth graders in the schools of a slum district and holding meetings with parents to secure their understanding and cooperation, the median scores for eighth graders were raised by as much as a half-year.

Another type of program makes use of work experience as the central agent around which the attitudes and interests of students are organized, with academic instruction related as far as possible to the work experience. Such a program is started in the junior high school, and develops from simple work experience projects to part-time employment and eventually to full-time employment as the student develops the skills and attitudes and habits that are necessary to hold down a job. A dozen such programs operated by school systems are described in a case-book.

Programs designed expressly for girls of this sub-group are very few, though a good case for such programs has been made by some writers. Work experience programs seem better fitted to boys than to girls, because the career of worker has more masculine than feminine appeal. However, certain feminine work experiences might be used, such as home-making and baby care. This has been tried out in a few cities with special classes of pregnant girls. Such girls are normally suspended from school when their pregnancy becomes visible. But a few cities have created special classes for them, often in cooperation with a settlement house or an organization such as the YWCA. In these classes, there has not been much success with home economics and child care courses. Possibly this is due to inferior planning and preparation by teachers, or perhaps it is due to a tendency by young pregnant girls to reject their babies and the role of motherhood, with a desire to get the pregnancy out of the way so that they can go back to school and progress in the ordinary way.

In general, it must be said that there is little or no scientific evidence for or against the experimental programs for socially disadvantaged and educationally maladjusted adolescents. Some of these projects have been acclaimed enthusiastically by their sponsors. Others have been allowed to die out. There is need of more systematic experimentation and evaluation of a variety of procedures.

Programs for Uncommitted Youth

If the analysis of the Uncommitted is reasonably correct, the age period from about fourteen to sixteen (grades nine to eleven) needs an educational program designed to build self-esteem and social fidelity. The relevant characteristics of these boys and girls are the following:

Lack of self-esteem based on their own achievement in school and society

Uncertainty about vocational choice

Cognitive development more advanced than personal autonomy

Lack of naive faith in society

Discontent with school

The educational program should be designed to build social fidelity as well as self-confidence. It might contain the following elements:

1. Opportunity for service to society. A variety of projects during the school year and during the summer for improvement of the school, the local community, and the wider community. This will lead to a commitment to social welfare and a faith in the improvability of society.

2. Positively oriented study of society. Stress in courses in social studies on the achievement of modern society in solving problems of public health, poverty, educational and economic opportunity, and the building of an inter-dependent world.

3. Use of adult models who demonstrate both self-esteem and social fidelity. Choice of teachers who are socially optimistic, active, and oriented toward the improvement of society. There is a greater chance in the future for the selection of teachers with appropriate personalities for certain age groups, as the teacher shortage decreases and opportunity increases to select the better ones. The use of biography in literature and the social studies could stress heroes with these positive qualities. A new set of biographical films produced by Elizabeth Drews of Michigan State University centers around the lives of contemporary people who are making positive contributions to the life of society, who have faith in the improvability of this society, and who lead personal lives that can serve as models for youth.

Dr. Drews describes the films and her use of them as follows:

The eight models for the films are:

Dr. Eugene Peterson, historian
Judge Mary Coleman
Robert von Neumann, artist
Dr. Barbara Redmore, radiologist
Kay Britten, folksinger active in politics
Dr. Loren Eisely, natural scientist and author
Dr. Anne Roe, social scientist
Dr. Harold Taylor, philosopher

"These models represented a development of individual potential and a kind of excellence which transcends the norm. As men and women they were creative, scholarly, and socially concerned, and none represented a sex stereotype. The men were masculine, virile, and successful, but they were also sensitive, aesthetic, and introspective. Their career engagements were in education (historical museums) writing, art, and philosophy. The women were attractive in very feminine ways with aesthetic interests and deep altruistic concerns but their careers were in such non-feminine areas as politics, law, technology, and research. Each model revealed his values and philosophy of life as the style-of-life filmed episodes unfolded. In the latter part of each film the models were interviewed about their early memories and their childhood development. In this way the students were able to see further links between their own lives and those of unusual individuals.

"Discussions followed each film and were the real bond of the course. These discussions were relatively free and unstructured, following a 'conversational dialectic' pattern, and thus were vastly different from recitations. However, the freedom was not merely negative for there was positive encouragement to independence of an informed and responsible nature. For example, each student had a mimeographed copy of the sound track of each film, and could raise questions on the basis of actual statements of the models rather than fragmented memories of these statements."

For this type of student it is especially important that education should strike a balance between analysis and affirmation. The education of middle-class children in recent years has been too strong on analysis and too weak on affirmation.

A Program for the Maintainers

Much could be written about desirable improvements in the educational program for the large group of maintainers, but this would be beyond the scope of this paper. A high school curriculum is desirable which does the following things.

1. Helps young people to make a rational, objective analysis of the modern society.

2. Builds faith in the perfectibility of human society, based on democratic ideals.

3. Prepares young people for a career in which they see their occupation as a means of realizing their own aspirations and the goals of their society.

(Final Draft)

Interrogation of Dr. Havighurst by:

Abraham Knepler, University of Bridgeport
Professor of Sociology

You speak of affirmation and you give the illustrations from Miss Drews' work. I could see where this particular approach could be very important, not only for the uncommitted but for all of the group that you mention.

You speak of the moratorium. I'm concerned with this as a variable constant, in a sense. The moratorium suggests to me very little of a stable, productive or socially acceptable period for society. I wonder whether there are any appreciable differences in the length of the moratorium today as compared with the moratorium of a hundred years ago. Also, is there any difference in the quality of this, particularly in the light of the seemingly contradictory aspects of society that you portray? You speak of an earlier dating period, and I go along with this, and an earlier start to marriage before we become tough enough in our ego structure. At the same time, we have a more extended period of education for more people, both in total numbers and in percentage; more sexual experience, seemingly for all, again starting much earlier; a long period before we move into the work force; fewer extrinsic experiences to hold us together in marriage once we're in marriage, even though we get in there earlier; hardly any recognition in the school curriculum about this long period of time that we will spend in the institution of marriage, whether with one partner or more than one; fewer continuities, in other words, from the period of adolescense to the period of marriage. We have fewer continuities in terms of preparation for our adult life and yet we're living for a much longer period of time than ever before, in a society in which self-esteem or opportunity for self-esteem, is not adequately provided; where the emphasis on social fidelity seems to be negated; where our mass media call attention, to a much greater extent than ever before, to the relative lack of social fidelity among adults; where there is seemingly, from what you say, little opportunity in our mass-oriented school systems for satisfactory completion of developmental tasks. Under these conditions, what are the implications? Can we think of attempting to achieve the sense of affirmation, a sense of self-esteem, the sense of social fidelity? Can we think of achieving these within our presently constituted school systems and through our presently constituted social agencies?

Final Draft

Dr. Havighurst's response to interrogation of Dr. Abraham Knepler

You've summed up the problem very well. On the other hand, you or others could, of course, balance it by talking about the real and great positive possibilities that our society has produced for us now; much less need to do hard, burdensome work, with great possibilities for interesting and valuable use of free time; possibilities for the creation of a peaceful world, a world effectively without war; and possibilities for real enhancement of the amount of personal satisfaction one gets from life. What has happened, what we're a part of here, is a process of Society creating out of itself a much more complex society with great possibilities for both good and evil. This is really what's happening and it is always a temptation to go back to the"good old days," which were simpler - at least they look simpler to us. I think all we can say here is that, for better or worse, we're in this complex and changing society.

An Optimistic View

I personally am optimistic about this. I'm an instrumental activist. If we work at it, I'm convinced that we can come out far better than our grandparents did when they were at this age. But it's going to be at the cost of a good more self-doubt, probably, than the average among our grandparents had. It's going to be at the cost of a good deal more educational effort on the part of every one of us. The thing is that it's worthwhile, because, as we're able to move into a society in which the individual will be a much more satisfied person in terms of what's important by any long term set of values, the gain can be not only a better material standard of living but a better non-material standard.

There is one group of social scientists who regard the laws of cultural development as a set of inevitabilities like the law of gravity. They say, "It doesn't make any difference what you do here. We're moving in certain directions that we will find out about as time goes on but we can't do anything about it. We're just pawns; we're chips of wood carried along on this stream of history."

Our Decisions Will Determine History

I don't believe that. I believe that we are a part of a stream of history but there are two other things that I believe. One is that there is some kind of beneficent force (It's an impersonal one, for me) which is operating in history in the direction of greater human good. The other belief is that human decisions and human purposes can be translated into social action and the education system is, of course, a major system for translating human pruposes and values into social action. So, for me, the important thing is to analyze the situation, then to move rationally and intelligently in the direction of making our goals achievable. As I say, I'm a positivist. If you're a pessimist, then you don't think we can move as well or as fast. If you're a social determinist, in the sense that humans can do will make any difference, I don't know what to tell you. I'm a social determinist in the sense that I believe that, if we adopt a industry, this will have influence on people, their values, and their lives. But we're the ones to adopt it and I'm not convinced that we're bound to adopt or refuse to adopt these things. I think that what we as people decide to adopt or refuse to adopt will determine the course of history.

Affirmation in Literature and Social Studies

Another point here: you said that you saw no reason to suppose that positive, affirmative education at the junior high level should be limited to the uncommitted. Of course I quite agree with you. Even the maintainers are much less self-assured and have much less social fidelity than they had a couple of generations ago. For me, it would be desirable to move in the direction of relatively critical but nevertheless positive affirmative education, particularly in our literature and our social studies. You can't do this very usefully, I think, in math and science because they're inevitably analytical studies. But I see literature as the great breakthrough in curriculum in the next five years. We'll try to consolidate what we're learning about better teaching of science and math, but we've got to make a new social studies program and a new literature program. What's at stake is a lot more then learning to think like a scientist. It's far more important for us and for the future if boys and girls can learn to think, not only like a sociologist or a psychologist, but, somehow, like a believe in the possibilities of human history. You can't avoid infringing a little in the area of religion, if we can interpret religion broadly. There's a lot of faith involved and, when I talk about a positive affirmative program in the high school, I mean one that is concerned with faith, only I wouldn't teach it as I would if I were involved in a particular operation in religious education.

(Final Draft)

Interrogation of Dr. Havighurst by:

Fred Wilhelms, National Association of Secondary School Principals
Associate Secretary

I would like to say that the National Association of Secondary School Principals, which I represent, is enormously interested in this project of yours. There has been a kind of excitement around our office about it.

We ourselves, through our Committee on Curriculum Planning and Development, have been trying to get a nationwide study off the ground though we have concerned ourselves more purely than your project has with what Dr. Havighurst calls the "Marginal Group". We've referred to them as "the Society of Losers". One salient difference between our project and the Connecticut project is that we haven't found any money yet! We hope we can be of service on the "nibbling away" at the public, for we hope to pick up from around the country all kinds of things that help a little.

Now to get into my role of questioner. At a conference last year where I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Havighurst, he talked about the need for "affirmation" for the uncommitted group which he described today. I heard questions come up from the audience on that occasion about whether he meant to censor the literature which they read. I know that's a difficult problem, but I was particularly impressed with one answer which he gave by citing the work of Dr. Elizabeth Drews of Michigan. Dr. Havighurst, if you don't mind, I think it would be good for you to chat a little bit about that work as an example of the kind of thing you mean by affirmation.

(Final Draft)

Dr. Havighurst's response to interrogation of Fred Wilhelms

I'm happy to do this, but I know that time is going swiftly. Elizabeth Drews' set of films is a good example of an affirmative, positive kind of educational experience. Elizabeth Drews at Michigan State had grants from the U.S. Office of Education to work with fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds. She started with an interest in the gifted, although it got to be something else before she finished, and she asked for permission, in the East Lansing School, to teach a group of ninth graders who were superior, above average in I.Q. They said to her, "We'll give them Social Science credit for your course and you go ahead and do what you please." And so she developed a course called "Being and Becoming". I may say that Elizabeth is a wonderful woman, a little on the romantic or idealistic side. She really is just almost too good for this world and this experience helped her to become a little more realistic, I think.

Dr. Drews' Filmed Biographies

She said, "Now boys and girls, everybody should keep a notebook. Cut out anything you read, if it's in a magazine, and put it in your notebook with your comments. We'll have a glorified 'show and tell' period every other day in class." But by the end of the semester, she was disturbed because, as she said, "I found that these youngsters were very much puzzled about being and becoming. They didn't know what they were and what they were going to become. They were full of doubts about themselves and society."

She decided that "Being and Becoming", as she had tried to teach it, wasn't right for bright fourteen-year-olds. So she said, "I've decided that I need something that would allow them ample opportunity to discuss but it has to be something that has more positive direction. I hit on the idea of some biographies."

She got Education money for filming and developed a set of films which are not yet available. (I don't know why. I guess the Office of Education has a problem of marketing films.) She filmed biographies of eight people, four men and four women who are now living. All of us would know two or three of them, I think.

One of the films that I've seen is on Warren Isley, the anthropologist at the University of Pennsylvania, who's been very effective in relatively popular but serious writing about human evolution. We start this film by seeing Warren Isley walking along a beach in white canvas trousers and with bare feet. He picks up a couple of shells and looks at them; you have the feeling that he's tracking down the history of life by looking at the shells. Next you see him in his living room. or study. She sits there and interviews him about how he happened to become an anthropologist. It turns out that he was raised in a small Nebraska town. His father was not a highly educated man. She says, "How did you happen to get the notion of being an anthropologist? Nebraska isn't the place where you'd naturally think of it." He tells her, "There was a lawyer who lived near us who had quite a library. We had no school library. We had no public library. But this fellow learned that I wanted to read; so he told me I could use his library as I pleased. That really started me. I found that I could educate myself just by using his library." Eventually his family come in; so what you see is a man who has committed himself to society: the making of an instrumental activist in a fairly critical way.

Any one of these Michigan boys and girls could identify with this man. It's not something out of this world, either in time or place. There are four women in the films, two of them artists, as I remember, and Anne Rhodes, a psychologist at Harvard. Again, these are all people who have a rounded life in terms of commitment to family, commitment to career, and so on.

Miss Drews' idea here is that the course doesn't have to be limited to bright ninth graders; you can probably take an average ninth or tenth grade group here. She gives them the text so that they can discuss this later. The film sensitizes and interests them; then they can discuss it. She organizes a whole unit around each of the eight people. The result is that you've got, roughly, a semester's work here when you put in other things.

This, you see, is an example of accentuating the positive. These are all complex people. One is Harold Taylor, the former president of St. Lawrence College, now active in peace research & obviously not exactly a conformist. You see Harold Taylor tooting a saxophone, I think. He's a member of a little combo. Then you see him playing tennis. Then you see him at his desk being a philosopher. So a youngster who doesn't know what a philosopher is has a chance to see that a philosopher is a man and a family man and he has other interests, but he is very much concerned about dealing with problems of our society.

An Insistent Beatnik

Can I give you one other example that's related in an interesting way? A few months ago I was talking at a Unitarian church forum in Evanston on adolescence. At the end of my talk, we had a discussion period and hands went up all over the place. I was busy trying to cope with these questions but, out of the corner of my eye, I could see one hand that kept staying right up and for some reason I was ignoring it. Finally, when the man stood up, I realized why. He was a Beatnik, a fellow with long yellow hair, corduroy jacket and so forth. He had to have his say; so I said "All right." He stood up so that he could be heard and seen, I guess, and said, "You know, all that talk of yours about affirmation - you know what I think you're saying? You want to brainwash us. You want us to believe that everything is fine in our society. That's what you're talking about." I coped with it as well as I could at the time and he stuck around to come up to see me afterwards. "Do you have office hours?" he said. "My office is sixteen miles away on the other side of Chicago," I told him, "but I'd be glad to talk with you." He never showed up but, at the time, he said, "I've got some ideas about the education of young people that I want to talk to you about."

What was happening was that this fellow, in effect, was telling me, "I've got to have this moratorium. You've got to let me be this way for four or five years and don't try to brainwash me out of this because I'll come through this eventually and I'll be a positive person. But I'll be a person much more complex, much more understanding of our society. It may be hard on me. I may be a bit unhappy about it. I may even make my folks unhappy. But I'll be a better man if you give me five years."

I'm not willing to say that this is true of all the uncommitted but I think we must recognize the possibility that, although some of the uncommitted are bound to be this way, they'll come out of it in the end much stronger personally.